

CHANGES OR CORRECTIONS OF ADDRESS.

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The Editor must again remind all students that it would be an act of courtesy to send a post card announcing any change of address, and tenders her sincere thanks to those who have kindly done so. Many alterations have, however, come to her knowledge only indirectly, or through the medium of third persons. She is sure that if students had any conception of the confusion and difficulty that the omission causes, they would render her this small service. All communications to be addressed to

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THE TEACHING OF DANCING.

It does not fall to the lot of many of us to give dancing lessons or hold dancing classes professionally. On this subject we therefore remain critics. Personally it has been the writer's lot in the last ten years to be present at seven different dancing classes, besides having taught sundry friends at divers times. So the conviction has been forced into me that the present methods of teaching dancing are, as a rule, beneath contempt, and that a revolution is earnestly needed. A discussion of the subject in the pages of L'Umile Pianta is therefore much to be desired, whereby opinions may be collected and expressed. We have pitiful wails from would-be hostesses that it is impossible to get "dancing men." I don't wonder, seeing how those said men have been taught! Last week at a "dancing class" I saw six miserable little boys crackling with self-consciousness planted in the middle of a room while some twenty little girls sat round doing nothing (they call it "resting") and giggling. Skipping ropes were put into their hapless hands, and they were supposed to skip to music! Dancing bears would have been happier; more at home and more natural. Is it wonderful that many boys say they "hate dancing," when the real case is simply that they hate to be made ridiculous. Then when the children do dance the one idea of the instructress seems to be to make them "graceful," not to teach them what they will need to know in a ball-room. So one sees eight little people solemnly wasting their time and energy elaborately "walking through" the Lancers. Yet when the Christmas parties come and the dances begin what preparation have they had for them—can they waltz the first figures—can they do "soldiers" or a permissible form of "cake walk" in the last! Not they! So they look and feel extremely out of it—conscious that they are lacking in something the grown-ups or the half grown-ups possess, and so again they feel

that they "hate dancing," when the poor mites have never had a chance of learning its joys.

I would plead for the total abolition of great dancing (*soi disant*!) classes where the time is spent chiefly in deportment exercises and apparatus dances (*i.e.*, tambourine dances and skirt dances). Children properly taught at home, given daily drill and gymnastics, do not need all this extra drilling. Children need *individual* attention while they learn their dancing steps, and had better receive that at home, where they will not be laughed at and made self-conscious. But as the adaption of one's step to one's partner's is half the secret of successful dancing, in lieu of the present class, I would substitute a "dancing" reunion, to be spent in going through a regular programme, including the newest dances such as the "two-step," and the oldest such as the minuet, according to taste. Especially, however, the square dances should be danced as they are in the ordinary world of society. Add a few singing quadrilles and a cotillion, and think how much more chance children would have of learning to dance decently than now, when half their time they are "sitting down" while the little ones "learn the polka step!" This may seem to our readers grossly utilitarian; but others may endorse these comments from their own experience.

TERPSICHORE.

OUR POSSIBILITIES OF EXPANSION.

An exceedingly interesting paper, with the above title, was read by an ex-student at our re-union last Easter. The discussion to which this paper led the way, seemed so suggestive that it was decided that a paper should be written for the Magazine, which should deal with the experiences of students who have made use of their training in ways other than those which are inseparable with our positions as teachers—for instance, in holiday work among the poor, in evening and village classes or clubs.

When I promised this paper for the "Plant," I believed that I had undertaken to "*edit*" not to "*compose*" an article. The intention was that the article should be a collection of paragraphs each narrating the experiences of a student, but although I know many students have undertaken work of some sort among the poor, and although I know also that many of their experiences are very interesting, I am sorry to say that I have not had many letters giving such information as was requested. I therefore must do what I can, and write down a few suggestions, some about experiments already tried, others about those that may be tried by students.

Having once spent a very happy month as "holiday mother" in one of Dr. Barnardo's cottages (an account of which was published in L'Umile Pianta), I ventured to write to Dr. Barnardo and ask for suggestions as to ways in which students might be of use—I received a most courteous reply.

The letter ran: "First and foremost we shall be very glad indeed of the services of anyone who is qualified to act as a holiday or week-end mother at our Girls' Village Homes. Mr. Godfrey (the honorary secretary), remembers how greatly your previous services in this capacity were appreciated, and Mrs. Godfrey will be very glad to receive from you any application for such an appointment during the holiday months."

Students who feel that they could take charge of a cottage for a week-end or during the holiday of the regular